

**Councillor B Chapple OBE**  
**Councillor for Aston Clinton & Bierton**  
Buckinghamshire Council  
The Gateway  
Gatehouse Road  
Aylesbury  
HP19 8FF

26 April 2022

Dear Councillor Chapple,

## **RE: Transport, Environment and Climate Change Committee**

Further to our recent attendance at Buckinghamshire Council's Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on Thursday 10 March, please find below our responses to the outstanding queries raised.

### **How many trees destroyed? What was their average age?**

Tree, hedgerow and woodland surveys were carried out to British Standard 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction) in advance of any clearance works. Surveys recorded individual trees, hedgerows, groups of trees and woodlands and included information on species and size of trees. This information was used to optimise the design to avoid tree removal where practicable. A summary of the information recorded in surveys and number of trees that are planned to be removed is summarised below for the EKFB section of works in Buckinghamshire:

	Total in LLAU (Limit of Land to be Acquired or Used)	To be removed
single trees	2,068	1,352
hedgerow	195km	133km
tree groups	113ha	82ha
woodland	45ha	21ha

### **How many trees destroyed that had a TPO?**

We do not record this information as the Act supersedes any Tree Preservation Order that was in place.

### **How many trees 'saved' by removal and replanting?**

The following trees and hedgerows have been saved by removal and replanting and/or protection in addition to those that have been retained by avoidance:

- 8 veteran trees
- 1.3km Important Hedgerow
- 12 veteran trees retained and protected
- 3.3km Important Hedgerow retained and protected

### **What is the loss of carbon sequestration based on the trees that have been destroyed?**

The Phase One ES reported emissions (dis-benefit) from land use change as 100,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. Removals (benefit) from carbon sequestration from tree planting were reported as 500,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

### **What is the dwell time between a tree being removed, the new tree being planted and reaching maturity?**

Advanced planting started in 2017 with over 700,000 trees and shrubs planted to date. Trees and shrubs will be planted as areas of construction works are completed and we expect the majority of new planting to be complete by April 2027. According to the Woodland Trust *"a tree becomes mature when it starts producing fruits or flowers. A typical English Oak tree starts producing acorns at around 40 years old, in contrast, Rowan starts producing berries after around 15 years"*. Removal of trees and vegetation started in winter 2018 and therefore the dwell time from replanting to maturity is between 15 and 50 years.

### **Planting 7m trees is not enough to sequest your carbon, what more will you do?**

We're applying the carbon reduction hierarchy. Our focus is to eliminate and reduce carbon emissions as far as possible, before considering carbon offsets. We intend to develop a carbon offsetting strategy for the residual carbon emissions that we cannot cut. We intend to explore: (1) opportunities for carbon 'insetting'; (2) the opportunities for carbon offsetting projects on the HS2 estate, including opportunities presented by our plan to contribute to delivering HS2's biodiversity net gain objectives; and, (3) opportunities to support offsetting research and development projects.

### **When will the rest of the trees be planted?**

Trees and shrubs will be planted as areas of construction works are completed and we expect the majority of new planting to be complete by April 2027.

### **What is the carbon offset for the rest of the carbon by 2035?**

This information is not currently available, this will be established as part of developing the carbon offsetting strategy. The amount of offsetting required will depend on the scope of activities being delivered and the extent of carbon reduction achieved.

**The Woodland Fund is applicable to areas up to 25 miles away from the route. How will funds be prioritised towards more impacted areas such as Buckinghamshire as opposed to areas within the 25-mile distance that are not affected?**

The HS2 Woodland Fund, administered by the Forestry Commission, is set up for anyone within 25 miles of the route to apply in order to capture a wide range of projects. The funds are not prioritised towards more impacted areas within the 25 miles. The fund relies on landowners getting in touch with HS2 Ltd and applying to the fund.

The fund is large (£5million on Phase One) and we still have much of the fund to allocate; if Buckinghamshire Council have proposals on how to get more landowners from Buckinghamshire applying to the fund, we would be very keen to further discuss. Unfortunately, due to the terms of the fund, HS2 Ltd cannot proactively approach parties to apply to the fund.

**The Committee was advised that HS2 Ltd monitor supplier compliance with their contracts (for instance checking that wheel washing takes place and that lorry signage is correct) however there was little detail on this. Can more detail be provided?**

All Main Works Contractors across HS2 have their own internal processes, involving logistics managers, security managers and duty-access managers, who all carry out assurance of wheel washing and other mud mitigation measures daily as part of their compliance checks.

Additional inspection of adherence to HS2 commitments involves both desktop assurance (reviewing, approving, and checking the contractor's processes for management and maintenance of these measures) in addition to on-site assurance carried out by our construction assurance managers, logistics managers and traffic managers.

HS2 use a rolling programme to ensure every site compound is covered, but also feed in information relating to complaint hotspots and construction activities to carry out targeted assurance, where required.

Continued failure to observe the processes detailed within the driver's information pack, and the standards set by HS2, can lead to subcontractors being removed from the project.

**Additional actions raised**

- **Investigate Highways concerns raised by the Cabinet Member for Transport.**  
Current correspondence ongoing between Cllr Steve Broadbent and Rohan Perin.
- **Consider increasing the meeting frequency of the Traffic Liaison Group.**  
Will be further discussed with Buckinghamshire Officers and at the Traffic Liaison Group to establish viability.
- **Ensure 'In Your Area' part of HS2 Ltd.'s website is up to date.**  
HS2 is currently reviewing the materials within the 'In Your Area' pages to ensure they contain the relevant content and the user benefits from clear signposting to the local

information required.

- **Consider what information can be shared at this stage with Members and Parishes regarding flooding concerns in Wendover and Fairford Leys, Aylesbury.**  
We are in dialogue with the Environment Agency around the Wendover hydrogeology and Stoke Brook, and will provide further updates to elected members and community groups at the appropriate time.
- **Circulate where public information on the Independent Design Panel can be found.**  
HS2 IDP panel chair reports are [here](#). Reports / minutes from workshops with the IDP remain confidential until S17 stage when a copy of their report is included in the Design and Access Statement for the Key Design Element. These have been produced for the Wendover Dean Viaduct (in C23) and can be found here: [Schedule 17 stage - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Assurances that the Environment Agency's flood consents along the Great Ouse date back to 2019.**  
Schedule 33 part 5 of the HS2 Act ensures that any flood consents (or other water related consents) required to facilitate temporary or permanent works to build HS2 will be submitted and approved by the regulatory authority. This includes any schedule 33 part 5 (flood consents) required when working in the vicinity of the River Great Ouse from the Environment Agency.
- **Responses to ecological queries.**  
As covered within previous responses.

We hope the above responses have suitably addressed the outstanding queries, but should you require any more information please let us know and we will work to resolve.

Many thanks for inviting us to the Buckinghamshire Council Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee. Should it be of interest, we are happy to return next year and, hopefully, demonstrate the progress made across the project and within your local communities.

Yours sincerely,



Maddelyn Sutton, David Emms, Rohan Perin and Gary Rogerson.  
HS2 Ltd.